



## Interpretive Structure of Media Products

### Tenets for Concept Development

- ❖ An interpretive media product presents an organized structure or framework (conceptual and spatial) of tangible/intangible links that are effectively developed -- through a *planned association* of text, graphics, objects, design and other media elements -- to facilitate opportunities for the audience to make intellectual and emotional connections to resource meanings.
- ❖ Interpretive media development involves effectively creating, altering and/or manipulating a physical space or environment in order to facilitate connections between the audience and resource meanings.
- ❖ Media concept development applies the elements of the "Interpretive Equation"\* (Knowledge of the Resource, Knowledge of the Audience, Appropriate Techniques) in two equally important integrated layers to create interpretive opportunities:

#### **Content**

- info/graphics/objects/resources (tangibles)
- meanings, significance and universal concepts (intangibles)
- themes and objectives
- interpretive framework/structure
- conceptual accessibility

#### **Space/environment**

- basic design elements
- flow/direction
- interactive design
- physical organization and structure (hierarchy and/or layers)
- interrelationships
- use/presentation of tangibles
- physical and conceptual accessibility

**Choose a panel or section of an existing interpretive exhibit, or page from an interpretive publication or website in your park, and analyze its interpretive structure, based on the tenets outlined above.**

- Identify all the tangible/intangible links that are developed through an association/combination of text, graphics, objects, audio/video, design, etc. Are they arranged in a hierarchy (conceptual and/or spatial) to maximize interpretive effectiveness?
- Have the space and content of the panel/page been structured/arranged to enhance interpretive effectiveness? How could the spatial and content structure be improved to maximize access to resource meanings?
- Apply the elements of the Interpretive Equation\* – how is knowledge of the audience (KA) and knowledge of the resource (KR) reflected in the spatial and content structure of the product? Are identifiable interpretive techniques a part of the structure (i.e. storytelling, questioning, word pictures)? Are they appropriate techniques (AT) – appropriate for the audience and the medium?
- Do all the elements of the media product – text, graphics, objects (if applicable), and design – “work together” to create opportunities for the audience to form their own intellectual and emotional connections with the meanings/significance inherent in the park resources being interpreted? If so, how?
- How do specific graphic elements facilitate and/or enhance opportunities for intellectual and emotional connections to resource meanings?

\*See Module 101 for more information on tangibles, intangibles and universal concepts, and the Interpretive Equation

## DEFINING AN INTERPRETIVE MEDIA PROJECT

### Needs and Outcomes

1. Describe the interpretive need for this media project.
2. What are the desired outcomes for this project?  
Outcome(s) for park visitors  
Outcome(s) for park resources  
Others
3. Cite connections of this project to park planning documents, legislation, and/or guidelines.
4. How will this media project support/accomplish park objectives and GPRA goals?
5. Who are the intended audiences for this media product?
6. How and where does the park envision this media product would be presented and why?
7. Is the medium pre-determined, or is there flexibility in selecting a medium to best meet the interpretive need within known constraints?

### Interpretive Content

1. List the primary subject matter areas or information concepts related to this interpretive need.
2. Are the primary information concepts simple or complex, concrete or abstract, or mixed?
3. Are there multiple perspectives to convey?
4. What types of known resources/materials (tangible resources) are available for conveying these information concepts (i.e., objects/artifacts, photos, slides, first-hand accounts, stories, historical quotes, video, music, maps, graphics, physical site locations/resources such as historic buildings or natural features, primary research documents, research databases)
5. Brainstorm and list all the intangible meanings and universal concepts\* which can be linked to the relevant tangible resources.
6. What possible themes emerge from the previous question?
7. Choose and list one or two potential overall themes for the product and sub-themes as appropriate.

(NOTE: The most effective themes employ a universal concept.)